

**Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, February 11,
1799 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve
Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul
Leicester Ford.**

TO JAMES MONROE MON. MSS.

Philadelphia, Feb. 11, 99.

I wrote you last on the 23d of Jan, since which yours of Jan 26 is received. A bill will pass the Senate to day for enabling the President to retaliate rigorously on any French citizens who are now or hereafter may be in our power, should they put to death any sailors of ours *forced* on board British vessels & taken by the French. This is founded expressly on their arret of Oct 29, 98, communicated by the President by message. It is known (from the Secretary of state himself) that he received, immediately after, a letter from Rufus King informing him the arret was suspended, and tho' it has been known a week that we were passing a retaliating act founded expressly on that arret, yet the President has not communicated it, and the supporters of the bill, who themselves told the secret of the suspension in debate, (for it was otherwise unknown,) will yet pass the bill. We have already an existing army of 5,000 men, & the *additional* army of 9,000 now going into execution. We have a bill on its progress through Senate for authorizing the presdt to raise 30. regiments (30,000 men) called an *eventual* army, in case of war with any European power, or of imminent danger of invasion from them *in his opinion*. And also to call out & exercise at times the *volunteer* army, the number of which we know not. 6.74's & 6. 18's making up 550. guns (in part of the fleet of 12. 74's, 12. frigates, and 20. or 30. smaller vessels proposed to be built or bought as soon as we can), are now to be begun. One million of dollars is voted. The government estimate of their cost is about

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4,500. D (£1000 sterl) a gun. But there cannot be a doubt they will cost 10,000 D. a gun, & consequently the 550. guns will be 5 ½ millions. A loan is now opened for 5. millions at 8. per cent., & the *eventual* army bill authorizes another of 2. millions. King is appointed to negotiate a treaty of commerce with Russia, in London. Phocion Smith is *proposed* to go to Constantinople to make a treaty with the Turks.

Under two other covers you will receive a copy of the French originals of Gerry's communions for yourself, and a doz. of G. N's pamphlets on the laws of the last session. I wish you to give these to the most influential characters among our country-men, who are only misled, are candid enough to be open to conviction, & who may have most effect on their neighbors. It would be useless to give them to persons already sound. Do not let my name be connected with the business. It is agreed on all hands that the British depredations have greatly exceeded the French during the last 6. months. The insurance companies at Boston, this place & Baltimore, prove this from their books. I have not heard how it is at N. Y. The Senate struck out the bill continuing the suspension of intercourse with France, the clauses which authorized the P to do it with certain other countries(say Spanish & Dutch), which clauses had passed the H of R by a majority of, I believe, 20. They agreed, however, to the amendment of the Senate. But Toussaint's clause was retained by both Houses. Adieu affectionately.

Feb. 12th. The vessel called the *Retaliation*, formerly French property taken by us, armed & sent to cruise on them, retaken by them & carried into Guadaloupe, arrived here this morning with her own capt crew, &c. They say that new commissioners from France arrived at Guadaloupe, sent Victor Hughes home in irons, liberated this crew, said to the captn that they found him to be an officer bearing a regular commission from the U S, possessed of a vessel called the *Retaliation*, then in their port; that they should inquire into no preceding fact, and that he was free with his vessel & crew to depart; that as to differences with the U S, commrs were coming out from France to settle them; in the meantime, no injury should be done to us or our citizens. This was known to every Senator

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when we met. The Retaliation bill came on, on it's passage, & was passed with only 2. dissenting voices, 2. or 3. who would have dissented happening to be absent.